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documents clear and valuable. The book is well printed, sells at a moderate price and is a credit to the firm of Putnam.

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**The French in the Heart of America.** By John Finley, Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914.

The title of this book is to be interpreted in the geographical, not the psychological sense. Apart from its intrinsic worth it possesses a peculiar interest due to the circumstances under which it has been given to the American reader. The greater part of its contents was delivered in the form of lectures to French audiences in the Sorbonne and other intellectual centres of France. The keynote of the author's treatment of his subject is to be found in the fact that his purpose was to stir up in his French audiences an interest and pride in the glorious past, which so many of their gallant and adventurous countrymen, soldiers, sailors, priests, played in the winning of the North American continent to civilization. We may take as a summary of this thesis a passage which occurs towards the end of the volume: "France not only christened America; she not only stood first far inside that continent at the north, and furnished Europe proof of its mighty dimensions; she also gave to this continent, child of her christening, the richest valley of the world. . . . When France did yield it, because of forces outside the valley (there was hardly a sound of battle there) she gave it in effect to a new nation. She shared it with the aboriginal American, she gave it to the ultimate American. By her valorous holding she taught the fringe of colonies along the Atlantic their first lesson in union, she gave them a leader out of the discipline of her borders, George Washington, whom, in the course of time, she directly assisted with her sympathy and means to make certain the independence of those same colonies." (p. 397.)

After a brief introductory chapter our guide conducts us along the rugged path of French exploration, pursued by Cartier, Champlain, Le Caron and their followers, from the cliffs of the Saguenay to the Great Lakes; and from the Great Lakes down the Mississippi to the Gulf. The most exacting of Frenchmen could not fail to be pleased, even delighted, with the strain of enthusiasm in which, in florid language and with a constant eye for the picturesque Dr. Finley tells that story of courage, suffering, success and failure. His generous admiration is extended not alone to soldier and politician, but is given in unstinted measure to the Gray friar and the Black gown. The *coureurs de bois*,

too, are awarded their ample meed of fame as the pioneers who first blazed with axe and trod with moccasin the paths which in later years, the engineer with his theodolite and steam engine has developed into great highways of the west.

Not, of course, with the systematic completeness of Parkman or Fiske, the fortunes of New France are sketched as the *fleur-de-lys* slowly gave way before the ensign of England; and this, in its turn, disappeared, here by the fortune of arms, elsewhere by the political act of Napoleon, before the flag of freedom and democracy.

But when we have reached the passing of French dominion we have scarcely reached the half-way landmark of the book. The writer carries us along through the settlement of the wilderness, the rise and growth of towns and cities; and he loves to contrast how the whirligig of time has brought great centres of population, vast industries, and opulent agriculture to succeed the backwoods fort and the untilled prairie; he sets restless, modern America against "the background of Gallic adventure and pious endeavor." The book may be read with interest by many a one who would be dismayed if condemned to wade through Parkman, or the *Jesuit Relations*. Even the man who knows his Parkman will not in every case, be familiar with the quantities of information which Dr. Finley furnishes regarding present development. Frequently we are treated to an unexpectedly long, but never tedious digression. A chapter, for instance, opens with a brief notice of La Salle's voyage up the Illinois river; well, the Sangamon flows into the Illinois, and, before we know it we are in for quite a long sketch of Abraham Lincoln.

Besides the more formal setting forth of the contrasts and other relations between the past and the present, Dr. Finley frequently stimulates interest in the bygone by reference to the actual. You may care little for Colbert, but you will henceforth associate his name with that of one of your friends after you have read the following passage which occurs in the account of the Mississippi voyage: "It was for years a wish of mine that when Mark Twain should come to die, he should lie, not in an ordinary sepulchre of earth, but in the river which he knew so well and loved and of whose golden days he sang. I wished that the river might be turned aside from its wonted channel, as the River Busentius for the interment of Alaric, and then, after his burial there, be let back to it again, that he might ever hear the sonorous voice of its waters above him, and perhaps, now and then, the call of the leadsmen overhead, crying the depth beneath, as he himself in the pilot house used once to hear the call 'Mark Twain' from the darkness below." (pp. 90-92.)

After a brief review of the efforts that have been made to conserve

the forests, streams, and other riches of the country—a movement which the writer strongly urges—the book concludes with an epilogue consecrated to the memory of Parkman, from whose storehouse Dr. Finley has liberally drawn.

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**Contemporary American History (1877-1913).** By Charles A. Beard, Associate Professor of Economics in Columbia University. The Macmillan Co., New York, 1914. 8°, pp. xiii + 397.

The special purpose of the author limited the scope and content of this work. He aimed at supplying students of American government and politics with a guide to contemporary history in order to stimulate interest in current events, as well as to round out their investigations in the past of American political movements and institutions. The work needs no apology. It is confined to special topics and will serve a useful purpose inside and outside the class-room. No effort is made to present a complete picture of the activities of the past thirty-five years; nor is the work a mere chronicle of notable happenings. In thirteen chapters or essays a very thorough analysis is presented of the drift in American political and economic life in what the author styles "the most wonderful period in American development." As might naturally be expected in a treatise dealing with movements which are still largely in process of adjustment very little attempt is made to pronounce verdict on their character and significance.

The author has judiciously excluded polemics from his pages. At times, however, opinions are presented which will not meet with universal acceptance. President Cleveland's action in the Venezuela boundary dispute is narrated in a fashion not calculated to enhance the reputation for statesmanship of the President or his Secretary of State, Mr. Olney. The author's views are a tribute to English self-restraint and moderation. "Great Britain yielded and agreed to the earlier proposition on the part of the United States that the issue be submitted to arbitration; and this happy outcome of the matter contributed not a little to Mr. Cleveland's reputation as a 'sterling representative of the true American spirit.' This was not diminished by the later discovery that Great Britain was wholly right in her claims in South America."

Whether it is that the author devotes his attention almost entirely to the discussion of parties and principles, or that platforms were more important than persons, one cannot escape the conclusion that the great figures in American political life during the last quarter of a century appear very insignificant in his pages. Time alone can determine whether